

Environmental Review Process

February 2009

The California High-Speed Rail Authority and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) began a project-level environmental review for the Merced to Fresno section in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

March 2009

Scoping meetings were held to receive agency and public comments on the scope of issues that should be analyzed in the Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS). Comments were used to produce initial alignment alternatives and station and design options for consideration in a Preliminary Alternatives Analysis (AA) Report.

October 2009

An FRA/Authority workshop was conducted to present results of the alternatives evaluation. The FRA and Authority provided recommendations for which alignment alternatives, stations, and design options should be carried forward into the more detailed EIR/EIS process.

December 2009

The results of the FRA/Authority workshop were presented to the Authority Board and the Authority Board directed staff to conduct additional analysis before making a final decision on the alignment alternatives, station and design options to be carried forward in the EIR/EIS process. Two public meetings were held to present the draft results of Preliminary AA Report and to collect comments.

April 2010

The Preliminary AA Report was presented to the Authority Board and the Board approved the alignments, stations, and design options for further study in the EIR/EIS. The Preliminary AA Report can found at www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/lib_merced_fresno.aspx

August 2010

The Supplemental AA Report was presented to the Authority Board and the Board approved the refined wye connections to San Jose and the new design options near Le Grand and Chowchilla for further study in the EIR/EIS. The board also approved the elimination of three heavy maintenance facility sites from additional study. These refinements were made to streamline the environmental review and reduce or avoid adverse impacts of the project. The map inside this factsheet illustrates the results of the Supplemental AA Report.

May 2011

Several changes to the project alignments have been proposed in an effort to reduce environmental impacts. After careful evaluation the project team determined that, where feasible, designing the tracks at-grade would reduce noise and visual impacts. Pending CHSRA Board approval on May 5, 2011 these changes will be evaluated as part of the environmental document. The proposal includes at-grade tracks through downtown Merced and an at-grade station in Merced as well as some sections along the BNSF alignment. Road realignments and closures associated with these changes will also be evaluated in the environmental document. The tracks will remain elevated through the cities of Madera and Chowchilla.

Next Steps - Summer 2011

In summer of 2011, the Authority plans to release the Draft EIR/EIS for the Merced to Fresno Section. After the document is released local agencies, stakeholders and the public will have 45 days to review and provide comments. Copies of the document will be made available in local libraries as well as online. A series of public hearings will be held to gather written and oral comments. Information on specific meeting dates and locations will be sent out via mail and email. Please contact Merced_Fresno@hsr.ca.gov to be added to the mailing list. Comments received on the Draft EIR/EIS will be evaluated and responded to in the Final EIR/EIS. The Draft EIR/EIS process will lead to the selection of a preferred alternative, establishing the alignment and station locations to be carried forward in the Final EIR/EIS.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The California High-Speed Rail Authority is committed to updating and involving the public during the environmental review for the HST. For more information, please visit www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov

Merced to Fresno Section Information

Call: 800-727-2316

Email: merced_fresno@hsr.ca.gov

Request a speaker: Please contact us if you are part of a community organization and would like a presentation or update at one of your meetings.

San Jose to Merced Section Information

Call: 800-881-5799

Email: san.jose_merced@hsr.ca.gov

Fresno to Bakersfield Section Information

Call: 866-761-7755

Email: fresno_bakersfield@hsr.ca.gov

Para más información, por favor llame al 1-800-881-5799, o visite la Página Web www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov

如需索取本通知中文版, 請電詢加州高速鐵路局:

1-800-881-5799

Để nghe đề nghị này bằng tiếng Việt, xin gọi:

A Vision for California

California is currently on track to building the country's first true high-speed rail system. On more than 800 miles of track, high-speed trains will carry Californians and visitors from around the world up and down the state at more than 200 miles per hour. High-speed rail provides an environmentally friendlier alternative to constructing thousands of additional freeway miles or dozens of new airport runways. It's a safer, cleaner and more efficient alternative to flying or driving that will create thousands of jobs and new opportunities for people and communities.

About the Merced to Fresno Section

The Merced to Fresno section of the High-Speed Train (HST) system is 60 miles long and includes the junction that permits high-speed trains to be routed either to Sacramento or San Francisco in the north. Proposed route alternatives generally follow the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) and the Union Pacific (UP) railroads. A HST station is proposed in Downtown Merced and Fresno. A heavy maintenance and repair facility will be evaluated in the Merced to Fresno HST project area as well. Currently, there are five potential heavy maintenance and repair facility sites being evaluated in the environmental review. In March of 2011 the High-Speed Rail Authority Board voted to apply for \$2.43 billion of high-speed rail funding recently returned to the federal government by the state of Florida. If selected, California could put these funds towards completion of the entire backbone of the statewide system – linking Merced and Bakersfield, including stations in each respective city. For more information on the Merced to Fresno section, please visit http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/Merced_-_Fresno.aspx



Constructing the High-Speed Rail System

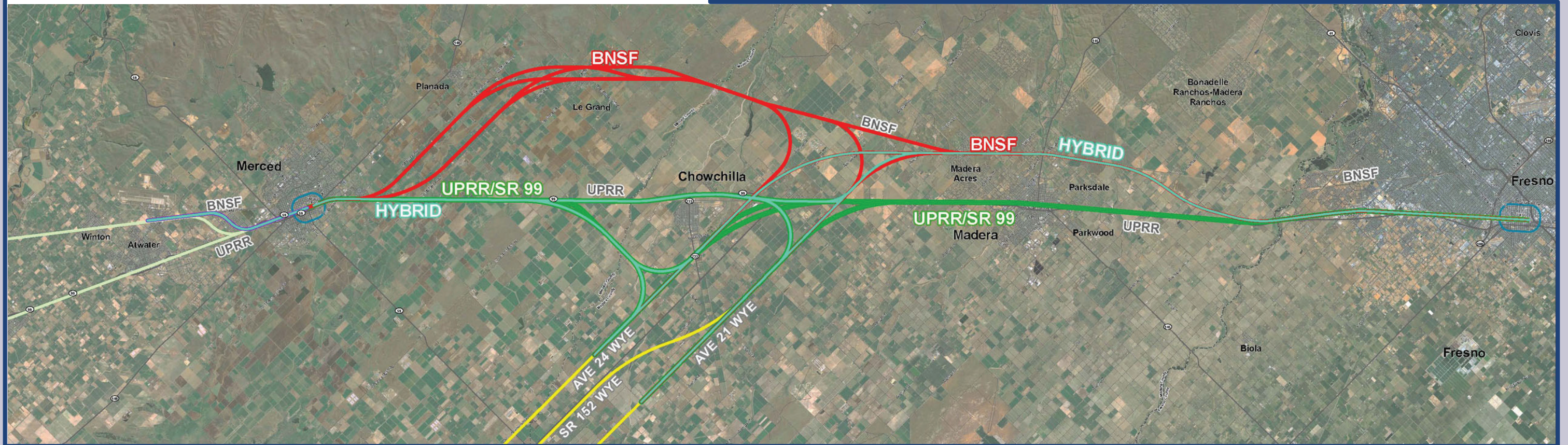
Construction of the initial phase of the high-speed rail system is scheduled to begin in mid-2012 and will put thousands of Californians to work in the Central Valley. The initial phase of the rail to be constructed is a 120-mile stretch from north of Fresno, near Madera, to Bakersfield. The California High-Speed Rail Authority Board used formal criteria to select the Central Valley for the first phase of construction. As of Spring of 2011, the California High-Speed Train project has approximately \$5.5 billion available to invest in the first phase of construction of the statewide system. It is estimated that for every \$1 billion invested, 20,000 construction-related jobs will be created.

Construction of the remainder of the Merced to Fresno section is estimated to begin in early 2013. Alignments to be analyzed in the Draft EIR/EIS can be found on a map on the inside of this factsheet. During the comment period for the Draft EIR/EIS, the public will have an opportunity to provide input on the proposed routes, as well as environmental impacts and mitigation. Please check the Authority's website for updates on the status of the Draft EIR/EIS. No final decisions about track placement will be made until the Final EIR/EIS has been certified.

Merced to Fresno Section EIR/EIS Alternatives

Preliminary Alignments For Discussions Only

- UPRR/SR 99 Alternative
- BNSF Alternative
- Hybrid UPRR/BNSF
- PTG Alignment
- Merced to Sacramento Program Line
- Station Study Area
- State / US Highway



Right-of-Way Acquisition

In order to construct the high-speed train, the Authority recognizes that there may be a need to purchase private property. The Authority will follow a specific process for all property acquisitions.

Property acquisition will not occur until after the Final EIR/EIS is certified.

For more information, please visit www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/rightofway.aspx.

Request for Expressions of Interest

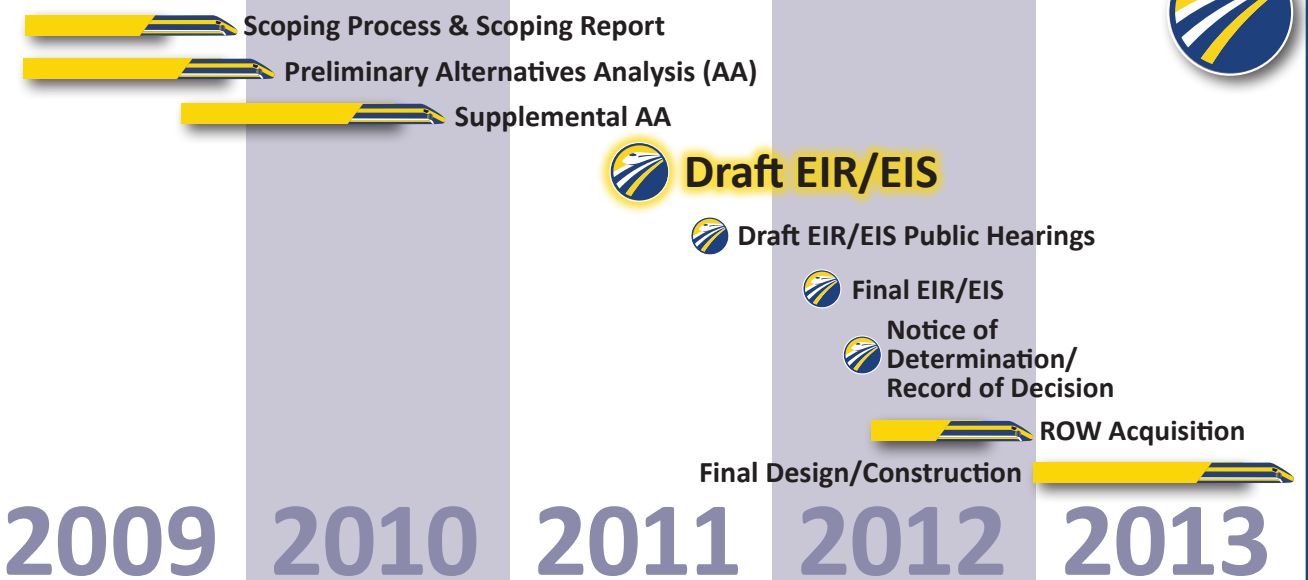
The California High-Speed Rail Authority received more than 1,100 responses to the Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) within the response window, which closed March 16, 2011.

This was not a formal solicitation or procurement process. The Authority sought to identify interested parties for the design, construction, operation and funding aspects of both the initial construction segment in California's Central Valley and the overall first phase of the statewide project stretching from the Los Angeles basin to the Bay Area.

The purpose of this request for expressions of interest was to assist the Authority in shaping its approach to the formal procurement process for elements of the project. Submissions will not be evaluated, and they are not a prerequisite for participating in the procurement process.

Please visit the CHSRA website for a list of respondents to the RFEI or, for further information about the procurement process email RFEI@hsr.ca.gov. To be notified of business and employment opportunities, register with Bidsync by visiting www.bidsync.com.

Proposed Project Schedule*



*Schedule subject to change